

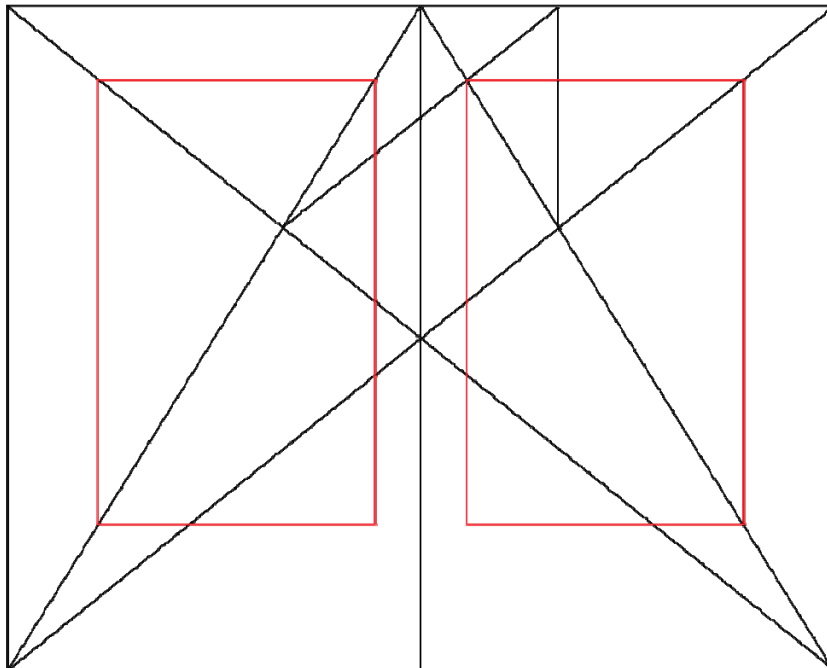


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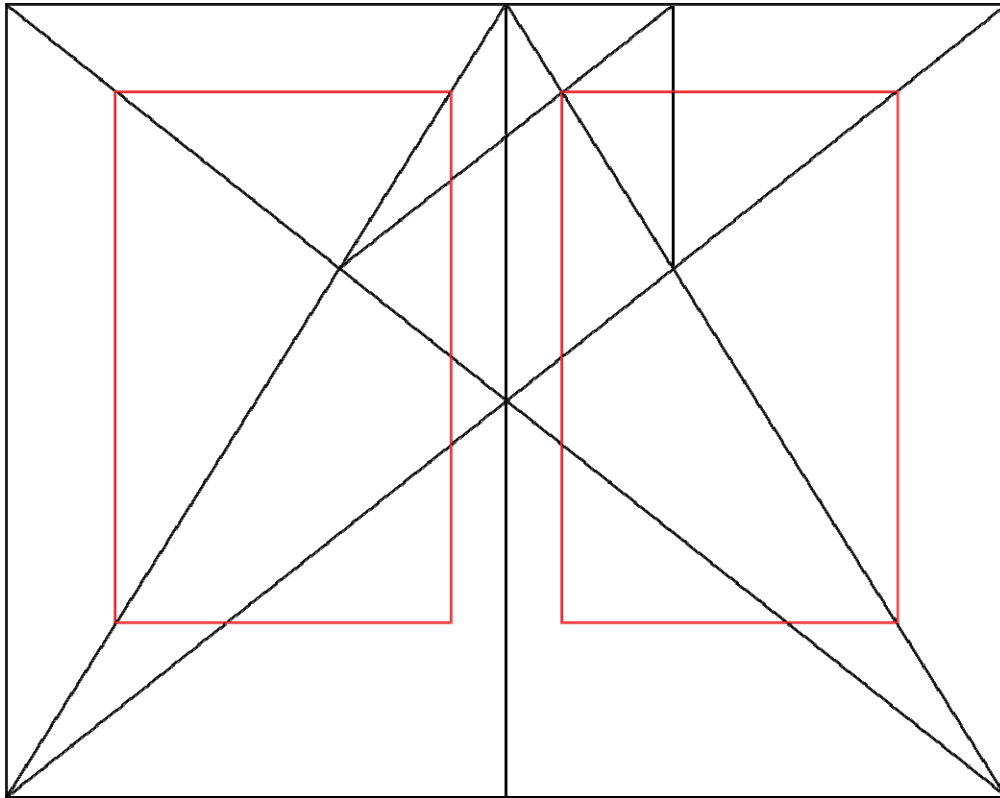
Agitprop

Part 2

Layout, Fliers, Pamphlets, and Copy-shop Agitprop



Van de Graaf [Page Construction](#)



Van de Graaf [Page Construction](#)

Layout

Making your material look good is not a waste. Material that looks good will be read by many more people. The waste is to lose readers because of not making your text look good. So here are some ways to control the look of your output:

White space

If at all possible, surround your print with white space. See the above illustration for an idea of the classic look of book pages. White space makes your material readable.

Bold, *Italic*, Underline, and BLOCK CAPITALS

Be careful with Block Capitals. They can make your material look as if you are shouting. But otherwise, all of these devices can help you to create a hierarchy of meaning that will help your readers to understand you better.

Fonts

There are many. They are either serif (like “Times”), or they are sans-serif (like “Calibri”).

Justify

Justify is used for columns. **Columns** are used for newspaper articles, and magazines. Columns allow more words on the page.

Numbering (footer)

Always number documents that have more than two pages. The most versatile numbering format is the one that goes at the bottom and in the middle. It works for left-hand (verso) and right-hand (recto) pages equally well.

Headlines

Try to keep headlines on one line. Less is more. Five words is a lot, for a headline.

Logos

Use logos when you can. They create an impression of authenticity.

Break up slabs

Use all kinds of ways to break up large slabs of text, so as to give your readers resting points, and landmarks in the text.



A Typical South African Event Flyer

Fliers and Pamphlets

Fliers (Flyers) and Leaflets

These are handed out free, as advertising. Usually they only have text on one side. Sometimes they are miniature versions of a poster. In South Africa, most political fliers are A5 (half an A4) in size.

Fliers need to project the message that they are supposed to convey, very simply and clearly. People who take fliers do not, on average, spend more than a few seconds looking at them. Very few of them will keep the flier or look at it twice. Therefore the main information must be the most prominent information.

If the flier is to advertise an event, then the main information is Date, Time and Venue. The nature of the event comes after these in importance, even if it is put at the top of the flier. But of course it must also be there.

As with posters, it is important to avoid the kind of “clutter” that obscures the simplicity of the message.

Text in sentences and paragraphs is unlikely to be read. Text in slogan form, and as announcement is what goes on fliers. In other words, less is more. The graphics, layout and illustration should support and not compete with the text.

Logos can be used, but what gets most attention on any page is always the same thing: A human face or a human figure. In text, what gets most attention is names of people. Polychrome is not necessary in a flier design, just as it is not necessary in a poster.

Pamphlets

A pamphlet is a text publication. It is usually like an essay, or what is sometimes called a tract. It is similar to writing for periodicals like theoretical magazines, or as part of a book. The difference from these is that the pamphlet is an occasional and not a regular publication, and it is shorter than a book.

In South Africa, a pamphlet might typically be A5 in size, several thousand words in length, and anything from 4 to 32 pages, or sometimes even more than that. Pamphlets are often printed professionally. Sometimes they have a cover, sometimes not. A recent SACP pamphlet was “Deepen the Historical Ties between the ANC and SACP”, printed for the Party by Shereno printers. It was a print version of a lecture given on 23 November 2012 as part of the ANC’s Centenary celebrations.

Pamphlets have a long history in politics. The one of the most famous pamphleteers in the English language is [Tom Paine](#). The 1848 Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels is a pamphlet, maybe the most successful one ever. Joe Slovo’s “The South African Working Class and the National Democratic Revolution” is a pamphlet-length work.

A pamphlet is always an option when an occasional response or publication is needed. The Communist University’s booklet format is not different from the historic pamphlet form.

Bua Komanisi

The South African Communist Party keeps a title that is a hybrid between a regular publication and a pamphlet, called [Bua Komanisi](#). It does not come out at regular intervals, but it is numbered in series. It is used for occasional publication of important documents, such as discussion documents. The most recent one, published in May, 2013, is “Let’s not Monumentalise the National Development Plan,” a discussion of the NDP.



Jetline, a South African franchise chain of copy-shops

Copy Shops, Distribution and Markup

Copy-shops allow people access to printing on demand in urban centres and in some small rural towns.

Copy-shops are usually based on the use of photocopiers (Xerox process). Nowadays, these machines can print direct from an electronic file, which can be sent to the print-shop by e-mail, or brought to the shop on a thumb-drive (flash drive) or on a CD, or downloaded by the shop from a web site.

Customers pay per copy. It means that they can order and get what they can afford.

Copy-shop Agitprop

Copy-shops open the door for small, local organisations to get into print and become autonomous producers of agitprop material. This may include pamphlets, political education booklets, and publicity fliers.

Distribution and Markup

You may be limited to what you can pay for, and you may have to give out your material to the public free. A proportion of your output, and maybe most of it, will always be of this kind. It is one among many ways to project your agitational propaganda.

But what you can also do is to produce for sale to other sellers. That is to say, you can get hawkers to sell your material, if you give them the possibility of making a profit. This is where you have to use the principle of “Mark-up”. In business, most commodities are “marked up” from the purchase price to the sale price by at least

50%, which will give the business a gross profit before expenses of 33%. Sometimes the markup is 100%, giving a gross profit of 50%.

It is no good to give a hawker a 10% markup. That is not enough.



18th Century girl selling pamphlets from a basket

You, too, need a markup, to make the business swing. There is no such thing as “break even”. If you aim for “break even” you will lose money.

Let’s say an 8-page document, printed in booklet form, costs R2 from the copy-shop. You can mark it up by 50% for yourself and sell it to a hawker for R3. The hawker can mark it up by 67% and sell it for R5.

Remember that the hawker must travel, eat, and find the customers. At the above rates of return, it is possible that a hawker could survive, if the material sells.

The advantage of this is that everything is paid for and it spreads by itself.

Don’t forget that the value of the material in the product was also made by labour, as much as the physical object was. So it is up to you to give value by making sure that the content is good.

[Paperight](#)

Paperight is a South African web site that promotes the idea of using copy-shops as publishers. It is not yet fully successful, mainly because its catalogue is difficult to browse.

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